

What is claimed is:

1. An information processing method, comprising the steps of:

by obtaining information concerning a usage amount of money of a customer in a store, calculating an accumulated usage amount of money of said customer;

comparing said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer with a predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money; and

estimating an outgo time of said customer based on at least a comparison result of said comparing step.

2. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said comparing step comprises a step of judging whether or not said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

3. The information processing method as set forth in claim 2, further comprising a step of, if a second customer makes a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer and it is judged that said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, notifying said second customer of the estimated outgo time of said customer.

4. The information processing method as set forth in claim 2, wherein if said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, a time after a predetermined time has passed from a point of time when said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money is calculated in said

estimating step.

5. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

6. The information processing method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said predetermined time corresponds to said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money and is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

7. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer means an accumulated usage amount of money per customer.

8. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a step of notifying a second customer who made a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer if outgo information of said customer is obtained before said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

9. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

if outgo information of said customer is received, judging whether a reservation of a second customer is registered with regard to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer; and

if said reservation of said second customer is registered,

transmitting an instruction concerning a reserved seat to a restaurant terminal.

10. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

if a reservation as to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer is not registered when outgo information of said customer is received but said reservation by a second customer is registered as to another reservation unit, judging whether said reservation by said second customer can be changed to said reservation unit including said seat of said customer; and

notifying said second customer if said seat can be changed.

11. The information processing method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a step of transmitting information concerning a usage status of said customer to a terminal of a second customer if a request for obtaining information concerning a store usage status is received from said second customer, said information concerning said usage status generated based on at least said comparison result of said comparing step.

12. A program embodied on a medium for causing a computer to perform information processing, said program comprising the steps of:

by obtaining information concerning a usage amount of money of a customer in a store, calculating an accumulated usage amount of money of said customer;

comparing said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer with a predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money; and

estimating an outgo time of said customer based on at least a comparison result of said comparing step.

13. The program as set forth in claim 12, wherein said comparing step comprises a step of judging whether or not said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

14. The program as set forth in claim 13, further comprising a step of, if a second customer makes a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer and it is judged that said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, notifying said second customer of the estimated outgo time of said customer.

15. The program as set forth in claim 13, wherein if said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, a time after a predetermined time has passed from a point of time when said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money is calculated in said estimating step.

16. The program as set forth in claim 12, wherein said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

17. The program as set forth in claim 15, wherein said predetermined time corresponds to said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money and is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

18. The program as set forth in claim 12, wherein said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer means an accumulated usage amount of money per customer.

19. The program as set forth in claim 12, further comprising a step of notifying a second customer who made a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer if outgo information of said customer is obtained before said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

20. The program as set forth in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

if outgo information of said customer is received, judging whether a reservation of a second customer is registered with regard to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer; and

if said reservation of said second customer is registered, transmitting an instruction concerning a reserved seat to a restaurant terminal.

21. The program as set forth in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

if a reservation as to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer is not registered when outgo information of said customer is received but said reservation by a second customer is registered as to another reservation unit, judging whether said reservation by said second customer can be changed to said reservation unit including said seat of said customer; and

notifying said second customer if said seat can be changed.

22. The program as set forth in claim 12, further comprising a step of transmitting information concerning a usage status of said customer to a terminal of a second customer if a request for obtaining information concerning a store usage status is received from said second customer, said information concerning said usage status generated based on at least said comparison result of said comparing step.

23. An information processing apparatus, comprising:

means for calculating an accumulated usage amount of money of a customer by obtaining information concerning a usage amount of money of said customer in a store;

means for comparing said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer with a predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money; and

means for estimating an outgo time of said customer based on at least a comparison result of said means for comparing.

24. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, wherein said means for comparing comprises means for judging whether or not said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

25. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 24, further comprising means for, if a second customer makes a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer and it is judged that said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, notifying said second customer of the estimated outgo time of said customer.

26. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 24, wherein if said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money, said means for estimating calculates a time after a predetermined time has passed from a point of time when said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

27. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, wherein said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

28. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 26, wherein said predetermined time corresponds to said predetermined reference amount of money as to said accumulated usage amount of money and is set according to at least one of the number of customers and a category of a date.

29. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, wherein said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer means an accumulated usage amount of money per customer.

30. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, further comprising means for notifying a second customer who made a reservation for a reservation unit including a seat of said customer if outgo information of said customer is obtained before said accumulated usage amount of money of said customer exceeds said predetermined reference amount of money.

31. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim

23, further comprising:

means for judging whether a reservation of a second customer is registered with regard to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer if outgo information of said customer is received; and

means for transmitting an instruction concerning a reserved seat to a restaurant terminal if said reservation of said second customer is registered.

32. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, further comprising:

means for, if a reservation as to a reservation unit including a seat of said customer is not registered when outgo information of said customer is received but said reservation by a second customer is registered as to another reservation unit, judging whether said reservation by said second customer can be changed to said reservation unit including said seat of said customer; and

means for notifying said second customer if said seat can be changed.

33. The information processing apparatus as set forth in claim 23, further comprising means for transmitting information concerning a usage status of said customer to a terminal of a second customer if a request for obtaining information concerning a store usage status is received from said second customer, said information concerning said usage status generated based on at least said comparison result of said means for comparing.

34. A reservation method comprising the steps of:

transmitting to a server, registration information of a



reservation without time designation for a reservation unit which is already used by another customer in a store; and

receiving from said server, information including an estimated outgo time of said another customer, said information generated if a usage amount of money of said another customer using said reservation unit in said store satisfies a predetermined condition.